

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9-16 are presently pending in this application, Claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 having been amended and Claims 10-16 having been newly added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (hereinafter "AAPA") in view of Martellock (U.S. Patent 4,018,953); Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Martellock, and further in view of EP 449 556 (hereinafter "EP '556"); and Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Martellock, and further in view of MacNeill (U.S. Patent 5,385,873).

Claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 have been amended and Claims 10-16 have been added herein. These amendments and additions in the claims are believed to find support in the specification, claims and/or drawings as originally filed, for example, the specification, page 23, lines 21-32, and page 22, line 25, to page 23, line 20, and no new matter is believed to be added thereby. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

Briefly recapitulating, Claim 1 is directed to a method of manufacturing a honeycomb structural body, and it recites: "preparing a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; applying a sealing material in an uncured paste state onto a circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; fitting onto the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center

member configured to make a contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member applies a sufficient pressure the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member to scrape the sealing material and forms a sealing material layer on the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member while sliding along the circumferential surface of a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; moving said ring-shaped scraper in a length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from one end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the sealing material is spread over the circumferential surface of said pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; and moving said ring-shaped scraper in the length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from an opposite end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the moving of said ring-shaped scraper is reversed.”

It is respectfully submitted that Martellock does not teach or suggest “applying a sealing material in an uncured paste state onto a circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member,” “fitting onto the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center member configured to make a contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member applies a sufficient pressure the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member to scrape the sealing material and forms a sealing material layer on the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member while sliding along the circumferential surface of a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member” or “moving said ring-shaped scraper in the length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from an opposite end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the moving of said ring-shaped scraper is reversed” as recited in amended Claim 1.

More specifically, Martellock describes a coating method in which a coating collar is slid along the surface of a cylindrical substrate positioned in its vertical position.¹ And according to Martellock, the coating collar has a gasket and a ring which form a leak-proof trough with the side of the cylindrical substrate, and thus the leak-proof trough can contain a liquid material.² Thus, in the Martellock coating method, as the coating collar moves along the surface of the cylindrical substrate in its vertical position, the liquid material in the trough is deposited onto the surface of the cylinder,³ and Martellock simply states that the coating thickness depends on the viscosity and the rate of drying of a liquid material.⁴ Also, given the structure of the coating collar, the Martellock coating method would not allow the movement or sliding of the coating collar in the reverse direction. As such, it is believed that the proposed combination based on the alleged prior art and Martellock would not result in a method which would satisfy each and every element recited in amended Claim 1. Therefore, the subject matter recited in amended Claim 1 is believed to be clearly distinguishable from Martellock and the alleged admitted prior art.

MacNeill is cited for the claimed components of the sealing material and is not believed to teach or suggest “applying a sealing material in an uncured paste state onto a circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member,” “fitting onto the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center member configured to make a contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member applies a sufficient pressure the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member to scrape the sealing material and forms a sealing material layer on the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member while sliding along

¹ See, for example, Martellock, Abstract.

² See, for example, id., column 3, lines 5, to line 10.

³ Id.

⁴ See, for example, id., column 3, lines 33-37.

the circumferential surface of a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member” or “moving said ring-shaped scraper in the length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from an opposite end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the moving of said ring-shaped scraper is reversed” as recited in amended Claim 1.

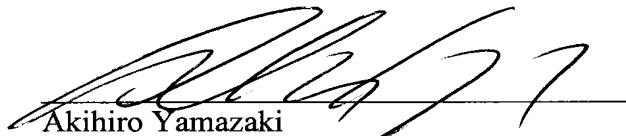
Because none of the admitted prior art, Martellock and MacNeill discloses the applying, fitting and/or reversing as recited in Claim 1, their teachings even combined would not render the manufacturing method of Claim 1 obvious.

For the foregoing reasons, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Furthermore, since Claims 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9-16 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, substantially the same arguments set forth above also apply to these dependent claims. Hence, Claims 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9-16 are believed to be allowable as well.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, L.L.P.



Akihiro Yamazaki
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 46,155

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/09)